



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis and Administration

June 2, 2006

Mark Bassett
Great Basin Museum
P.O. Box 550
Delta, Utah 84624

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 34075, Six County Association of Governments –
Construction and Operation – Rail Line between Levan and Salina, Utah

Dear Mr. Bassett:

The Surface Transportation Board's (Board) Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) is in the process of conducting an environmental review in Finance Docket No. 34075, Six County Association of Governments – Construction and Operation – Rail Line between Levan and Salina, Utah. The project consists of a proposed 45-mile rail line located in Sanpete, Sevier and Juab Counties in Utah. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being completed by SEA for this project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other Federal laws including the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). As the lead Federal agency charged with complying with Section 106 of NHPA, we are requesting your interest in participating in the project as a consulting party pursuant to 36 CFR 800.2(c)(5).

Two rail corridors, Alternate B and Alternate C, are currently under consideration for the proposed railroad construction project including the No Action Alternative (Alternate A). Alternate B consists of the proposed 45-mile line route situated between an existing Union Pacific Railroad line near Juab, Utah and a proposed coal transfer terminal facility near Salina, Utah. Alternate C extends from the southern end of the project area north approximately 14 miles before connecting with Alternate B. The project Area of Potential Effect (APE) consists of a 160 foot wide corridor along the majority of both Alternate B and Alternate C. The APE expands to a 900 feet corridor where the northern and southern portions of the proposed routes meet up with the existing rail lines (see Map). The project area is located on Federal (Bureau of Land Management), state and private lands.

SEA performed an intensive archaeological survey within the APE from April to July 2005. The survey resulted in the identification of 55 historic and prehistoric sites (see Table). Eight of the properties had been previously recorded but most are newly identified. Thirty-five of the sites likely meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). (The survey results are included in the draft document, Cultural Resources Inventory of the Central Utah Railroad Project in Sevier, SanPete and Juab Counties, Utah.)

SEA has been consulting with the Utah Division of State History/Utah State Historical Society (SHPO) regarding the National Register eligibility of the sites and likely adverse effects. SEA has also requested input from the Hopi Tribe, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, and Kanosh Band, Southern Paiute Tribe, regarding the National Register eligibility of the identified sites. Although we are still in the process of making final National Register determinations for the historic properties, the proposed action will likely result in adverse effects, including direct impacts, to some National Register eligible sites.

SEA intends to work with the SHPO, Federally recognized tribes, and other Section 106 consulting parties, as appropriate, in the development of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to stipulate agreed upon measures to resolve any adverse effects to historic properties. Such measures will likely include public outreach efforts and creative mitigation strategies in addition to data recovery. Other consulting parties identified thus far include the Bureau of Land Management, Six County Association of Governments, and the three Federally recognized tribes noted above. Please advise SEA if the Great Basin Museum wishes to join in these consultations.

If you need further information or have any questions, please contact me at (202) 565-1545 or Catherine Glidden, at (202) 565-1542, gliddenc@stb.dot.gov.

Sincerely,



Victoria Rutson
Chief
Section of Environmental Analysis

Enclosures – Map, Table

cc (w/out enclosures):

Matthew T. Seddon, Ph.D., Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer - Archaeology